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ABSTRACT

This study investigated college students' perceptions of the specific costs and benefits to children associated with maternal employment outside the home. Respondents were grouped on the basis of their own mothers' maternal employment status. Attitudes about psychological, academic, behavioral, and environmental risks associated with maternal employment were examined separately. A sample of 112 college students completed the Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children scale. Results revealed that a history of maternal part-time employment was associated with students' perceiving maternal employment as entailing fewer costs and greater benefits to children that either fulltime employment or nonemployment. (Contains 113 references.) (GCP)

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College Students' Views of the Specific Costs and Benefits Associated with Maternal Employment

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Abstract

This study investigated college students' perceptions of the specific costs and benefits to children associated with maternal employment outside of the home. Respondents were grouped on the basis of their own mothers' maternal employment status. Attitudes about psychological, academic, behavioral, and environmental risks associated with maternal employment were examined separately. A sample of 112 college students completed the Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children (BACMEC) scale. Oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during the participants' infancy: non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) revealed that a history of maternal part-time employment was associated with students' perceiving maternal employment as entailing fewer costs and greater benefits to children than either fulltime employment or nonemployment.

On both the cost and benefit summary scales and several individual scale items, significant differences emerged among respondents whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy and those whose mothers either worked fulltime or not at all. Young adults whose mothers worked part-time during the first two years of their life perceived significantly greater advantages and fewer disadvantages associated with maternal employment than young adults whose mothers worked fulltime or were not employed. Interestingly, on the majority of measures, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of children whose mothers worked full-time and stayed at home during their infancy.

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Cost subscale revealed nine significant group differences. Participants whose mothers worked full-time or stayed at home during their infancy were more likely to perceive greater psychological risks associated with maternal employment, including a tendency for children to display psychological problems, lower self-esteem, development of less competence as future parents, greater suffering, and failure to establish warm and secure relationships with mother.

Participants whose mothers worked full-time or stayed at home during their infancy also associated the greatest academic, behavioral and environmental risks with maternal employment. These respondents were more likely to voice concerns about poorer school performance, experimentation with drugs, use of alcohol and sex at an early age, trouble with the law; and exposure to dangerous situations.

Those participants whose mothers worked part-time during infancy not only reported the fewest costs associated with maternal work, but also reported the most benefits associated with maternal work. They were more likely to believe that maternal employment enhanced the abilities of children by providing role models for leading busy and productive lives, enhanced regard for women's intelligence and competence, and improved a son's preparation to cooperate with a future wife. In this study, children whose mothers worked part-time during infancy emerged as the strongest advocates for maternal employment, hailing its advantages and downplaying its disadvantages.

Introduction

One of the fastest growing social and economic trends in the U.S. has involved the entry of women into the labor force, in particular women with children. Maternal employment rates in Canada and the United stated doubled during the 1970s and 1980s, shifting from 1/3 to 2/3 (e.g., Dumas & Lavoie, 1992; Hofferth & Phillips, 1987), spurring considerable interest in the effects of maternal employment on parenting and the relationships infants form with caregivers (e.g., Barling, 1990; Cowan, C.P. & Cowan, P.A., 1992; Gottfried, A.E., & Gottfried, Aw.W., 1988; Lerner & Galambos, 1991). In the past several decades, economic and social conditions made it necessary for many married couples to deviate from the traditional male breadwinner/ female homemaker roles. Participation of women's labor force increased remarkably. The number of dual-paycheck married couples surpassed "traditional" families by three-to-one (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). This increase has also been due to a variety of noneconomic reasons. Many researchers, including Galinsky (1999), dispute the notion that many families need two incomes to be economically feasible. More than money seems to be motivating women to seek employment. Of the 3.7 million women with infants under the age of 1 in 1998, 59 percent were in the labor force, which was a record high, and almost double the 31 percent in 1976, according to a report released by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau (1998). Also in June 1998, Census Bureau data showed that of the 3.7 million women with infants, 36 percent were working full-time, 17 percent were working part-time, and 6 percent were actively seeking employment. Amara Bachu, co-author of Fertility of American Women: June 1998, stated that "the large increase in labor force participation rates by mothers since 1976 is an important reason why child-care issues have been so visible in recent years."

This increase of mothers in the work force has not been a constant trend, however. The labor force participation rates of mothers with infants fell from a record-high 59 percent in1998 to 55 percent in 2000, the first significant decline since the Census Bureau developed the indicator in 1976. "The declines occurred primarily among mothers in the workforce who were 30 years old and over, White women, married women living with their husbands, and women who had completed one or more years of college," said analyst Martin O'Connell, Fertility of American Women: June 2000. "Whether the declines are short-lived or will continue depends to a considerable extent on changes in the economy and changes in the lifestyles of new mothers in balancing work and child-rearing activities."

In contrast to this recent reversal, younger mothers (under the age of 30), African American mothers, Hispanic mothers, and mothers who had a high school education or less did not show a decline in their labor force participation rates between 1998 and 2000. The labor force participation rate of new mothers in 2000 was still a great deal higher than the 31 percent first recorded by the Census Bureau in 1976.

In response to these trends of maternal employment has grown a controversial body of psychological research exploring the effects of maternal employment on children. After almost 50 years of rigorous study by a multitude of researchers, very few clear patterns of effects have been observed.

The Importance of Quality Care

Developmental research has underscored the importance of the quality of care children receive in the first years of life. Neuroscience has made enormous advances in the past 20 years in explaining the process of brain development and changes in the structure of the brain that begin before birth and proceed through early childhood. Childcare advocates have publicized

this research to emphasize the importance of providing stimulating and caring environments from a very early time in a child's life, when children's brains are most rapidly forming. Brain development involves the differentiation and migration of brain cells to where they belong in the brain, as well as construction of synapses between nerve cells. These particular "wiring systems" in the brain guide a person's thoughts, memories, feelings, and behaviors (Helburn & Bergmann, 2002).

In addition, environmental conditions play a role in regulating brain neurochemistry, both positively and negatively (Helburn & Bergmann, 2002). Abuse or neglect can cause serious risks for healthy brain development. High levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol, have toxic consequences, over-activating neural pathways that control responses to fear and stress. They increase activity in the area of the brain related to vigilance and arousal, so that children who have experienced high levels of stress are likely to react to the slightest stress by means of hyperactivity or anxiety. Recurrent and unpredictable stress can affect brain development so that the child grows up more fearful and less socially capable. Animal experiments indicate that exposure to rich experiences have a positive effect on brain development and learning (Greenough, 1975). Rats reared in complex cages including play objects and other animals surpass other rats as adults in performance and have more mature synaptic structures (Greenough, 1975). Positive effects diminished over time when the animals were distanced from the enriched environment. The research done on brain development does not support the case for maternal or non-maternal care. However, it does support the case for care that fosters the development of deep relationships, responsive interactions, and stimulating experiences. In cases of children who do not receive adequate care and stimulation at home, high quality care outside of the home is considered important.

Craig Ramey (1999) of the University of Alabama evaluated the effects of enrichment on human development. Ramey found that he could produce the same results that Bill Greenough did with rats, with children. Participants included children as young as six weeks. He exposed a group of poor, inner-city children to an enriched environment that included learning, good nutrition, toys, playmates. A similar group of children were used as controls. Ramey tested their IQs after twelve years of age, and found that the benefits of early intervention endured. The enriched children had significantly higher IQs than those in the control group. PET scans, which measure glucose utilization in the brain, showed that the brains of the children exposed to the enriched environment were more active and more efficient than those children in the control group. The enriching experience showed as a prevention in mental retardation. Children in the control group, whose environment remained impoverished, had a higher rate of preventable retardation. From this study it can be concluded that the brain is highly sensitive to the early environment, and differences in exposure to early experiences are likely to account for differences in intellectual performance later on.

Results of Comparative Studies

In general, results of past studies of differences between children of working and nonworking mothers on most measures of adjustment, intelligence, and academic achievement indicate small group differences and have been inconsistent with each other. The majority of previous studies have yielded no significant differences in performance and development when children in single versus dual income families have been compared. In those studies that have found statistically significant group differences, the differences tend to be of limited magnitude.

When differences between groups have been detected, they are often different for sons and daughters. Generally, studies showing harms of maternal employment tend to find them for

sons more so than for daughters, and studies revealing benefits of maternal employment tend to find them to be strongest for daughters (Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, 1982; Hoffman, 1980). Bronfenbrenner and his associates have shown that working mothers have a more optimistic view of their daughters than their sons, while the opposite is true for homemakers (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1984). These findings are associated with the increase in mother-son conflict and strengthen peer involvement by boys. Both of these facts may put some males at jeopardy for an assortment of peer-related problems.

Psychological and Attachment Risks

Over the past 25 years, many studies have been done to examine the hypothesis that a history of extensive non-parental care leads to insecure–attachment. Many researchers have explored whether the nature of the relationship that develops between an infant and mother in the first year of infancy might be negatively influenced by repeated separations that arise when a mother is employed outside the home. Early, extensive non-maternal care in the first year of infancy has been modestly related to insecure infant-mother attachments in several studies (e.g., Belsky, 1990; Lamb, Sternberg, & Prodromidis, 1992; Roggman, Langlois, Hubbs-Tiat, & Reiser-Danner, 1994).

Lamb et al. (1992) collected data from 13 United States studies from the 1980s to assess the effects of non-parental care on infant-mother attachment. They found that 71% of infants in solely maternal care were securely attached, in contrast to 65% of those receiving non-maternal care more than five hours per week. There was evidence that infants were more likely to be securely attached when enrolled in non-parental care before six months of age, as well as in family–based daycare or in-home babysitters rather then in center-based care.

The NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (NICHD, 1996) presented preliminary results of a multi-site, United States based study in which 1,164 infants were followed from birth to 15 months, at which point Strange Situation assessments were carried out. There were no main effects for non-maternal care variables including age of entry into care, amount of care, and quality of care on attachment security. However, parental and non-parental care giving variables interacted to predict security. Mothers who were observed to be less sensitive to play and whose infants were observed to receive less positive, responsive, and stimulating non-parental care giving were least likely to exhibit a secure relationship.

Another researcher, Symons (1998) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the relations of post-partum maternal employment profiles with infant-mother attachment security, maternal sensitivity, and concurrent child and maternal characteristics in a rural Canadian sample. Participants in the study consisted of 57 mothers and their 23 to 27 month-old children whom were recruited from an earlier study of employment patterns, conducted by Symons & McLeod (1994).

Initial data were collected on the maternity ward within a few days of an infant's birth. Telephone contacts and mail-back procedures for questionnaires were used at three and six months. Maternal characteristics were evaluated using self-report measures of feelings about the separation experience, anxiety, and personality characteristics. The mothers' feelings about separation were evaluated by using the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale (Hock, McBride, & Gnezda, 1989). Both situation and dispositional anxiety were assessed by using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-Form Y (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983). To evaluate maternal personality characteristics, five personality subscales were chosen from the Personality

Research Form-E (Jackson, 1974). The final measure used was the Infant Characteristics Questionnaire (Bates, Freeland, & Lounsbury, 1979), which mothers completed to provide reports of infant temperament at three and six months after childbirth.

Two-year assessments were conducted of the mother-infant relationship using Q-SORT observations, maternal reports of stress and emotional adjustment, reports of child behavior problems, and child-care arrangement history. Two researchers conducted a 1 ½ hour laboratory visit and a two-hour home visit, which occurred within two weeks of one another. The laboratory visit consisted of an interview related to child-care arrangements, role satisfaction, and social support, during which time the child was free to play in a mock living room with toys. The same researchers who conducted the laboratory visit made the home visit. The researchers set up naturally occurring separations and reunions. Report measures were obtained, and child-care and employment histories were taken.

Symons (1998) assessed the levels of secure-base behavior by using The Attachment Behavior Q-set (Waters, 1987; Waters, Vaughn, Posada, & Kondo-Ikemura, 1995). This Q-set is a naturalistic assessment technique used to evaluate the attachment relationship between a mother and her infant. Using The Attachment Behavior Q-set Symons' results were not consistent with previous findings that a return to outside employment early rather than later is associated with higher levels of secure-base behavior (Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991; Lamb, Sternberg, & Prodromidis, 1992; Roggman, Langlois, Hubbs-Tait, & Reiser-Danner, 1994). Symons' study found that women who returned to employment after six months post-partum had infants who exhibited higher levels of secure-base behavior than women who returned to employment before six months or those were not employed at all.

Symons used the Maternal Behavior Q-SORT (Pederson, Moran, Sitko, Campbell, Ghesquire, & Acton, 1990) to assess the sensitivity of a mother toward her child. Stress that was specific to the parent-child relationship was assessed using the Parenting Stress Index-Form 6 (Abidin, 1990). Mothers reported their role satisfaction (Crockennberg & Litman, 1991) by indicating their degree of satisfaction with various aspects of their employment status on a 10-point scale. Coping was assessed using the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (Endler & Parker, 1991). Using these measures, Symons found that women who returned to work after six months were less concerned in the post-partum period about balancing parental and employment roles than other employed or unemployed mothers. He also found there were many coexisting group differences in maternal and infant characteristics. Women returning after six months reported less avoidance-oriented coping behavior, fewer child behavior problems, and less parental stress in the child domain than women returning to employment before six months or who were unemployed. The small number of women returning to employment between six months and two years had several other beneficial differences from the other groups. They were less stressed by children, they reported their children to be better behaved, and were less likely to use avoidance as a way of coping with difficult situations.

Symons' study was limited by the lack of observations within care-giving settings to provide better assessments of the quality of care. Nevertheless, this study's observations of infants in multiple settings at multiple times offers an expanded picture of the development of social relationships within their broader family and social ecology.

Harr (1999) examined the relationship between maternal employment and children's academic and social adjustment. Examined variables included: potential mediators by the maternal employment literature, maternal work schedule, children's gender and age, parents' marital status, mothers' and fathers' occupational status, and maternal role satisfaction.

Independent sample t-tests yielded few significant differences in adjustment between children of part-time employed mothers and full-time employed mothers. A substantial number of significant differences were found indicating better adjustment for children of part-time employed mothers, rather than full-time employed mothers. Children of part-time employed mothers demonstrated better adjustment than children of full-time employed mothers, when mothers resumed working after their children were school-aged. Stepwise multiple regressions revealed that parents' education levels overshadowed maternal occupational status in the prediction of children's adjustment. A final number of stepwise regressions indicated that children of mothers satisfied with their life roles, particularly their parenting roles, outperformed children of less satisfied mothers.

The relationship between maternal employment and children's psychological outcomes remains virtually unexplored. Available evidence shows that the impact is not always consistent (Richards & Duckett, 1991). Richards and Duckett (1994) found that working and middle-class 5th to 8th grade children from two-parent families with part-time employed mothers were likely to have higher self-esteem than children with nonemployed or full-time mothers. On the other hand, Rosenthal and Hansel (1981) found no differences in self-concept or vocational maturity among 7th to 9th grade children with employed and nonemployed mothers. It is also unclear whether the effect of maternal employment on children's psychological outcomes varies by gender (Montemayer & Clayton, 1983). Studies generally show that maternal employment benefits girls' perception of self, educational aspirations, and social adjustment, though the impact of maternal employment on boys is inconclusive (Montemayer & Clayton, 1983; Richards & Duckett, 1991).

Academic, Behavioral, and Environmental Risks

Maternal employment may change maternal and paternal involvement in children's education. Maternal work outside the home may reduce the amount of time that she spends with her child. Consequently, this reduced involvement may negatively affect children's academic outcomes. Researchers have advocated that parental involvement, more specifically maternal involvement, is critical to the relationship between maternal employment and children's education (Beyer, 1995; Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Muller, 1995; Richards & Duckett, 1991).

Some researchers suggest that the relationship between maternal employment and children's academic outcomes is mediated by maternal involvement in children's schooling (Beyer, 1995; Richards & Duckett, 1991). Nock and Kingston (1988) found that differences in the amount of time spent by parents with their children depended on maternal employment status. This suggests that maternal employment reduces the amount of time spent by mothers with their children, and changes the level of their involvement in children's education.

Beyer (1995) disputed that what affects children's academic achievement was not maternal employment, but specific parenting styles. Beyer proposed that these styles were affected by maternal employment status, mothers' work-related variables, family-related variables, and demographic variables.

Muller (1995) looked at data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1990), a nationally representative data set, and found that children with mothers who were employed full-time performed less well on mathematics achievement tasks than did those with mothers employed part-time or nonemployed. Muller also

found that children performed best when their mothers worked part-time, even after taking into account aspects of student and family background (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, family income, parents' education, family structure, etc.). Also while investigating the effects of parental involvement in the relationship between maternal employment and adolescents' mathematics achievement, Muller (1995) found that mothers who were employed part-time had the highest levels of involvement with their children. Muller's findings clearly show that the degree and type of maternal involvement in children's education differ in terms of maternal employment status.

Ju and Chung (2000) examined the relationships between maternal employment and school children's educational aspirations in Korea. The sample consisted of 1,294 fifth and tenth graders and their mothers. The students were attending public schools and living in two-parent families in Taegu, Koresa.

Two questionnaires were admir istered, one designed for the students and one designed for the parents. The student questionnaire consisted of items assessing gender, age, family composition, number of siblings, student's educational aspirations, and the degree of the mother's involvement as perceived by the student. The mother questionnaire consisted of items assessing the mother's age, number of children, education, employment status, occupation, number of hours worked per week, mother's monthly earnings, and her educational expectations for her child. A descriptive analysis and multivariate analysis were done on the data.

The results of this study showed that children whose mothers were working full-time had lower educational aspirations, compared with those whose mothers were not working. There was no difference found in the educational aspirations for the children of mothers working part-time and those whose mothers were non-employed.

The findings are largely inconsistent with most previous research in the United States, which has found that part-time maternal employment positively influenced various children's educational outcomes, while full-time maternal employment had no effect on children's educational outcomes (Beyer, 1995; Hoffman, 1980, 1989; Muller, 1995; Paulson, 1996; Zaslow, Rabinovich, & Suwalsky, 1991).

However, another U.S. study (Gorton, McCauley, Farrell, Nyce, Johnson, Covert, Strauss, Maggi, Fields, Eddy, Denis, Hemperly, Fronheiser, & Chambliss, 2003) obtained findings contradicting Ju and Chung (2000). In this exploration of urban and suburban middle school and college students, part time maternal employment was associated with the lowest educational and professional aspirations of students. Students whose mothers worked full time had the highest ambitions, while those whose mothers were non-employed expressed intermediate aspirations.

Researchers in the United States have suggested that the beneficial impact of part-time maternal employment is due to its association with access to resources (Desia, Chase-Lansdale, & Michael; Muller, 1995; Richards & Duckett, 1991). According to these researchers, mothers who work part-time appear to have more resources at their disposal for their children's education, in comparison with mothers working full-time. In general, mothers working part-time are apt to have higher educational levels, more educated husbands, higher family income, and tend to work in more prestigious occupations. Furthermore, part-time employment's more flexible work schedules provide part-time working mothers with more opportunities to be involved in their children's education. Therefore, children of families whose mothers work part-time may be more likely to benefit from maternal employment.

As in the U.S., Korean, full-time working mothers are likely to have fewer resources for their children than those mothers working part-time. They tend to have a low educational level, lower family income, work in less prestigious occupations, and be married to less educated husbands. Thus, these conditions associated with full time employment may account for the lower levels of children's educational aspirations found by Ju and Chung (2000).

Ju and Chung's research suggests that there are gender differences in the effect of maternal employment upon children's educational aspirations. Their results suggest that full-time maternal employment has a negative effect only on girls' educational aspirations. Girls of mothers working full-time were found to have lower educational aspirations than those of non-employed mothers.

Vander Ven et al. (2001) studied the impact of maternal employment on adolescent delinquency and the impact of children's being left home alone due to maternal employment. The direct effect of maternal employment was studied, as well as the effect of maternal employment on known delinquency risk factors, or "pathways to delinquency". The analysis suggested that maternal employment had no direct effect on delinquency, but did have an indirect impact on the delinquency pathways. There was a small effect of maternal employment on supervision of children; maternal employment was related to lower supervision, and thereby higher risk of delinquency. There was little influence of maternal employment on any of the other known pathways to delinquency. This held true regardless of the age of the child when the mother was working. Neighborhood disorder was shown to be related to delinquent peer association, while maternal employment was not.

Etaugh (1974) found no correlation between female juvenile delinquency and maternal employment. Nelson (1974) found that the majority of adolescent females with non-working mothers had a better adjustment score than those who had working mothers. In addition, the adolescent sons of full-time employed mothers were found to become better socially adjusted than those who had non-working mothers.

Research Controversy

Holcomb (1998) argued that, despite little empirical evidence, the media has conveyed negative and false information about dual-income families, and working mothers in particular. Dual-income couples are often depicted as lacking time for one another and their children, and as being selfish and materialistic. Their children are often portrayed as desperate for love and attention while being cared for by surrogate childcare providers. The media also often disseminates disturbing, exaggerated, and incorrect information about the outcomes for children of two-paycheck families (Holcomb, 1998; Galinsky, 1999).

In the past several decades, a significant number of researchers have concluded that maternal employment itself has very little effect on children (Galinsky, 1999) and when there is an effect noted, it is generally positive. Research has constantly and consistently reported that maternal employment does not affect the bond between the mother and child (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997), does not weaken the influence of parents on children (Fuligni, A.S., Galinsky, E., & Poris, M., 1996; NICHD, 1997), and does not influence children's evaluation of the mothers' quality of care (Galinsky, 1999). Maternal employment effects depend upon many factors, including parental attitudes towards maternal employment, the income of the family, the mother's sensitivity to her children, quality of the parents' jobs, and the quality of child care (Fuligni et al., 1995; Galinsky, 1999).

The current study investigated college students' perceptions of the specific costs and benefits to children associated with maternal employment outside the home as a function of their mothers' work status. Attitudes about psychological, academic, behavioral, and environmental risks were examined.

Method

Subjects:

The subjects used in this study were 112 undergraduates enrolled in an introductory psychology class at a small liberal arts college in the Middle Atlantic region of the U.S. The sample consisted of 51 males and 61 females. The subjects ranged in age from 17 to 27 years old.

Procedure:

The packet used in this study was handed out to subjects in the introductory psychology classroom. Subjects were asked to fill out the packet in its entirety. Ample time was given to the students to complete the questionnaire packet. The packet used in this study consisted of five different parts.

In part one, subjects were asked to provide demographic information and to answer questions concerning their career and family expectations. These questions required subjects to disclose information concerning their expectations about family plans, job type, job characteristics, and work preference based on the age of their youngest child. Subjects were also asked 10 questions concerning their attitudes toward their mother and father. These questions required subjects to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement on a 4 point Likert scale.

Part two of the packet was made up of the BACMEC questionnaire (Greenberger et al., 1988). The BACMEC is a 24-item scale developed to measure Beliefs About the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children. The BACMEC included beliefs about both benefits (13 items) and costs (11 items). Studies of five samples (n=375) have demonstrated that the total BACMEC scale and its subscales are highly reliable and have good convergent, divergent, and concurrent validity (Greenberger et al., 1988).

In part three of the packet, subjects were asked to disclose information about their mother's work status at each stage of development. The stages of development were infancy (birth to 1 1/2 years old), preschool (2 to 5 years old), childhood (6 to 12 years old), and adolescence (13 to 18 years old). The subjects were asked to report whether their mothers were employed part-time, fulltime, or not employed outside the home during each stage of development. Subjects also disclosed information about their mother's job, indicating whether it was professional, white collar, or blue collar work. Subjects were also asked to indicate whether or not they had been raised in a single parent household.

Results

Directionally adjusted responses to the BACMEC were totaled for each participant to create two summary measures of attitudes toward maternal employment, one assessing perceived benefits and another assessing perceived costs. Students who reported a history of having lived in a single parent household were excluded from subsequent analyses.

Maternal Employment During Infancy

A oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during infancy) was performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during infancy (non-employment,

part time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children. Significant differences on the Cost subscale were found among the maternal employment groups ($F=8.67$; $df=2/90$; $p<.01$). Students whose mothers worked full-time perceived fewer costs associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: $x=36.26$, s.d.=9.15, $n=46$, part time employment $x=27.40$,s d.=9.13,$n=25$, and fulltime employment $x=34.68$, s.d.=7.03, $n=22$). Oneway ANOVA also revealed significant differences among the groups in terms of the perceived benefits of maternal employment ($F=8.67$; $df=2/90$; $p<.05$). Students whose mothers worked part-time perceived there as being greater benefits associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: $x=50.00$, s.d.=7.85, $n=46$, part time employment $x=55.00$,s.d.=7.48,$n=25$, and fulltime employment $x=50.18$, s.d.=6.01, $n=22$).

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Cost subscale revealed nine significant group differences. On the nine items, participants' with part-time employed mothers perceived the fewest disadvantage associated with maternal employment. On seven of the nine items, participants' with non- employed mothers perceive the most disadvantages associated with maternal employment.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups ($F=5.04$; $df=2/90$; $p< .01$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Working mothers are more likely to have children with psychological problems than mothers who do not work outside the home.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	2.78	1.11	46
Part-time	2.04	1.02	25
Full-time	2.86	.89	22

Students whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy were least likely of the three groups to support the notion that maternal employment increases children's risk of developing psychological problems. Interestingly, participants whose mothers were full-time responded similarly to this item as the mothers who were non-employed. However, participants whose mothers worked full-time were more likely to support this item than the other two, maternally employed groups.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups ($F=4.71$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC: Children of mothers who work develop lower self-esteem because they think they are not worth devoting attention to.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	2.89	1.18	46
Part-time	2.12	1.05	25
Full-time	2.95	1.00	22

Young adults whose mothers worked part-time or full-time during infancy were similarly less likely than the young adults whose mothers were non-employed to perceive children of full-

time working mothers as more likely to develop lower self-esteem. Those whose mothers were not employed were most likely to perceive this adverse effect of maternal employment.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups
($F=5.75$; $df=2/90$; $p< .01$)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children of working mothers grow up to be less competent parents than other children, because they have not had adequate parental role models.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	2.96	1.25	46
Part-time	2.00	.96	25
Full-time	2.82	1.81	22

Children whose mothers worked part-time during infancy were least likely of the three groups to perceive children of working mothers to grow up to be less competent parents than other children due to the fact that they did not have sufficient parental role models. Those children whose mothers were non-employed and worked full-time during infancy did not see as great a risk to children of working mothers on this item as did the children of part-time employed mothers.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups
($F=3.74$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children whose mothers work suffer because their mothers are not there when they need them.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.48	1.26	46
Part-time	2.68	1.11	25
Full-time	3.32	1.04	22

Children whose mothers worked part-time during infancy were least likely of the three groups to perceive children of working mothers to suffer due to their mothers not being around when they need them. Those children whose mothers were non-employed and worked full-time during infancy did not see as great a risk to children of working mothers on this item as did the children of part-time employed mothers.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups
($F=4.138$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.93	1.20	46
Part-time	3.12	1.26	25
Full-time	3.50	.91	22

Students whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy were less likely than students whose mothers were non-employed during their infancy to support the notion that maternal employment compromises a child's warm and secure relationship with a mother.

Those students whose mothers work full-time scored at an intermediate level between the two other groups.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups
($F=4.82$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children do better in school if their mothers are not working full time outside the home.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.67	1.21	46
Part-time	2.80	1.32	25
Full-time	3.59	.85	22

Young adults whose mothers worked part-time were least likely of the three groups to perceive children of non-employed mothers to do better in school than children of full-time employed mothers. Those young adults whose mothers were not employed during infancy and worked full-time during infancy were most likely to perceive this adverse consequence of maternal employment.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups
($F=6.47$; $df=2/90$; $p< .01$)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children of working mothers are more likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an earlier age.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.24	1.30	46
Part-time	2.16	1.03	25
Full-time	2.91	1.19	22

Young adults whose mothers worked part-time were least likely of the three groups to perceive children of working mothers as more likely to experiment with substance use and sex. Those whose mothers were not employed were most likely to perceive this adverse effect of maternal employment, while those whose mothers worked full-time during their infancy endorsed this belief at moderate levels.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups
($F=4.99$; $df=2/90$; $p< .01$)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Teenagers get into less trouble with the law if mothers do not work full time outside the home.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.06	1.34	46
Part-time	2.16	1.11	25
Full-time	3.05	1.05	22

Students whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy were less likely than students whose mothers were non-employed during their infancy to maintain the idea that full-time maternal employment increases the risk of teenagers getting into trouble with the law.

Those students whose mothers work full-time during their infancy responded similarly to this item as to those students whose mothers were non-employed during their infancy.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups ($F=3.83$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children whose mothers work are more likely to be left alone and exposed to dangerous situations.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.43	1.07	46
Part-time	2.72	1.21	25
Full-time	3.27	.77	22

Students whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy were the least likely of the three groups to agree that a child is more prone to be left alone and exposed to dangerous situations if the mother is working. Students whose mothers were employed full-time and those whose mothers were non-employed during their infancy responded similarly to this item. These two groups were significantly more likely to support this item than the group whose mothers worked part-time.

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Benefit subscale revealed three significant group differences. On two of the items, participants' whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy perceived the greatest benefits with maternal employment. Those whose mothers worked full-time during infancy perceived the least benefits associated maternal employment, while those whose mothers were not employed during infancy endorsed the beliefs at moderate levels. One the item, participants' whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy perceived the greatest benefits with maternal employment, while those whose mothers were non-employed during infancy perceived the least benefits associated with maternal employment. Those whose mothers worked full-time during their infancy perceived moderate benefits on this individual item.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups ($F=5.40$; $df=2/90$; $p< .01$)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: For young children, working mothers are good role models for leading busy and productive lives.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.78	1.01	46
Part-time	4.56	.77	25
Full-time	4.00	1.02	22

Children whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy were most likely to agree that for younger children, mothers who work are good role models for leading busy and productive lives. Those children whose mothers were non-employed during their infancy were least likely to agree with this statement, while children whose mothers worked full-time during their infancy endorsed this belief at a moderate level.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups ($F=4.72$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)

BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Children whose mothers work full time outside the home develop more regard for women's intelligence and competence.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.72	.98	46
Part-time	4.40	1.04	25
Full-time	3.64	.95	22

Children whose mothers worked part-time during their child's infancy were more likely to see this as fostering children's respect for women's intelligence. In contrast, those whose mothers worked full-time and those whose mothers were not employed were less likely to perceive this advantage of maternal employment.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during infancy groups ($F=3.60$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Sons of working mothers are better prepared to cooperate with a wife who wants both to work and have children.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	4.02	.93	46
Part-time	4.40	.91	25
Full-time	3.73	.63	22

Young adults whose mothers worked part-time were most likely of the three groups to perceive sons of working mothers as better prepared to cooperate with a wife who wants to work and have children. Those whose mothers worked full-time were least likely to perceive this positive effect of maternal employment, while those whose mothers were non-employed during their infancy endorsed this belief at moderate levels.

Maternal Employment During the Preschool Years

A oneway ANOVA (maternal employment during preschool years) was performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during preschool years(non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children. Significant differences on the Cost subscale were found among the maternal employment groups ($F=3.79$; $df=2/90$; $p<.05$). Students whose mothers did not work at all perceived there as being greater costs associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: $x=36.69$, $s.d.=10.32$, $n=35$, part time employment $x=32.70$,$s.d.=8.73$,$n=27$, and fulltime employment $x=30.61$, $s.d.=7.92$, $n=31$). Oneway ANOVA also revealed significant differences among the groups in terms of the perceived benefits of maternal employment ($F=3.27$; $df=2/90$; $p<.05$). Students whose mothers worked full-time perceived there as being greater benefits associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: $x=49.06$, $s.d.=5.91$, $n=35$, part time employment $x=51.74$,$s.d.=8.86$,$n=27$, and fulltime employment $x=53.71$, $s.d.=7.59$, $n=31$).

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Cost subscale revealed three significant group differences. On the three items, participants' with non-employed mothers during preschool years perceived the most disadvantages associated with

maternal employment. On two of the three items, participants' with mothers employed full-time during preschool years perceive the least disadvantages associated with maternal employment.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during preschool years groups ($F=5.84$; $df=2/90$; $p< .01$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	4.09	1.09	35
Part-time	3.56	1.25	27
Full-time	3.13	1.09	31

Students whose mothers were not employed during their preschool years were more likely than students whose mothers worked full-time during their preschool years to support the notion that maternal employment compromises the development of a warm and secure relationship with a mother. Those students whose mothers work part-time scored at an intermediate level between the two other groups.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during preschool years groups ($F=3.25$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.86	1.22	35
Part-time	3.74	1.06	27
Full-time	3.19	1.01	31

Students whose mothers worked full-time during their preschool years were least likely of the three groups to support the idea that children whose mothers work do not learn as much as they would if their mother did not work. Students whose mothers were not employed were most likely to believe that young children learn more when mothers stay at home.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during preschool years groups ($F=3.93$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children of mothers who work develop lower self-esteem because they think they are not worth devoting attention to.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.11	1.18	35
Part-time	2.41	.93	27
Full-time	2.48	1.18	31

Young adults whose mothers were not employed were more likely than the young adults whose mothers were employed to perceive children of full-time working mothers as being more likely to develop lower self-esteem. Offspring of part-time and those of full-time employed mothers responded similarly on this item.

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Benefit subscale revealed two significant group differences. On both of the individual items, students' whose mothers were not employed during their preschool years were least likely to see maternal employment as beneficial.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during preschool years groups ($F=4.49$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Girls whose mothers work full time outside the home develop stronger motivation to do well in school.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.51	.85	35
Part-time	3.74	1.02	27
Full-time	4.16	.78	31

Young adults whose mothers were not employed during their children's preschool years were least likely to report that girls develop stronger motivation to achieve in school if their mothers work full time. Children of full-time employed mothers were most likely to believe this was an advantage of maternal employment.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during preschool years groups ($F=3.75$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Daughters of working mothers are better prepared to combine work and motherhood, if they choose to do both.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	4.03	.82	35
Part-time	4.48	.85	27
Full-time	4.55	.85	31

Young adults whose mothers worked full-time or part-time during their child's preschool years were similarly more likely than the young adults whose mothers were not employed to perceive mothers' working as benefiting their daughters by helping them be better prepared to combine work and motherhood. Those young adults whose mothers were not employed were less likely to perceive this benefit of maternal employment.

Maternal Employment During the Elementary School Years

Oneway ANOVA were next performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during the participants' elementary school years (non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children. No significant differences on the Cost summary subscale were obtained. However, oneway ANOVA revealed significant group differences on two individual items on the cost subscale. On these two items, students whose mothers did not work at all during their elementary school years perceived there as being greater risks associated with maternal employment than the students whose mothers were in the other two maternal employment categories. Significant differences on the Benefit subscale were found among the maternal employment groups ($F=4.35$; $df=2/90$; $p<.05$). Students whose mothers worked full

time during elementary school years perceived there as being greater benefits associated with maternal employment than the students in the other two maternal employment groups (non-employment: x=48.62, s.d.=6.52, n=26, part time employment x=50.05,s.d.=6.15,n=22, and fulltime employment x=53.64, s.d.=8.24, n=45). Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Benefit subscale revealed three significant group differences. On each of three items, participants' whose mothers were employed fulltime during their elementary school years perceived the greatest advantages associated with maternal employment. Those whose mothers worked part-time rated the advantages of maternal employment at an intermediate level, and those whose mothers did not work at all outside the home while they were in elementary school provided the lowest ratings of advantages.

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Cost subscale revealed two significant group differences. On the two items, participants' with non-employed mothers during their preschool years perceived maternal employment as most disadvantageous, while participants' with part-time employed mothers during their preschool years perceived moderate disadvantages.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during elementary school years groups
(F=6.44; df=2/90 ; p< .01)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	4.04	1.18	26
Part-time	4.00	1.07	22
Full-time	3.18	1.13	45

Children of full-time employed mothers were significantly less likely than those in the other two groups to see maternal employment as endangering the relationships between mother and child. Nonemployed and part-time employed mothers were both more likely to endorse that this is a risk.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during elementary school years groups
(F=4.68; df=2/90 ; p< .05)
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Teenagers get into less trouble with the law if mothers do not work full time outside the home.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.42	1.30	26
Part-time	2.73	1.28	22
Full-time	2.51	1.14	45

Children whose mothers did not work outside the home during their elementary school years were most likely to report that maternal employment increases the risk of teenagers getting into trouble with the law. Young adults whose mothers worked full-time were least likely to see this as a hazard of maternal employment.

Separate oneway ANOVA performed on the individual items of the Benefit subscale revealed three significant group differences.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during elementary school years groups
(F=4.99; df=2/90 ; p< .01)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Girls whose mothers work full time outside the home develop stronger motivation to do well in school.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.46	.81	26
Part-time	3.59	.91	22
Full-time	4.09	.90	45

Young adults whose mothers worked part-time or were non-employed during the elementary school years were similarly less likely than the young adults whose mothers worked full time to believe that girls develop stronger motivation to achieve in school if their mothers work full time. Those whose mothers worked full-time were significantly more likely to perceive this benefit of maternal employment than those in the other two groups.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during elementary school years groups
(F=6.25; df=2/90 ; p< .01)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Daughters of working mothers are better prepared to combine work and motherhood, if they choose to do both.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.92	.84	26
Part-time	4.23	.81	22
Full-time	4.62	.81	45

Young adults whose mothers worked full-time during their children's elementary school years were more likely than the young adults whose mothers were not employed to perceive mothers' working as benefiting their daughters by helping them to be better prepared to combine work and motherhood. Those young adults whose mothers were not employed were least likely to perceive this benefit of maternal employment. Those whose mothers worked part-time endorsed this belief at a moderate level.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during elementary school years groups
(F=4.47; df=2/90 ; p< .05)
BACMEC Benefit Subscale Item: Children whose mothers work are more likely to understand and appreciate the value of a dollar.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	3.27	.96	26
Part-time	3.55	.96	22
Full-time	4.00	1.09	45

Young adults whose mothers worked full-time during their children's elementary school years were more apt to believe that children of working mothers are more likely to understand and appreciate the value of a dollar. Young adults whose mothers were not employed were least

likely to perceive this benefit of maternal employment, while those with part-time employed mothers gave responses that fell in between those of the other two groups.

Maternal Employment During Adolescence

Oneway ANOVA were next performed in order to evaluate the relationship between maternal employment status during the participants' adolescent years (non-employment, part time employment, and fulltime employment) and students' perceptions of maternal employment costs and benefits to children. No significant differences on the summary scales emerged for either costs or benefits. However, oneway ANOVA revealed significant group differences on one individual item on the cost subscale.

Oneway ANOVA comparisons of three maternal employment during preschool years groups ($F=3.31$; $df=2/90$; $p< .05$).
BACMEC Cost Subscale Item: Children of working mothers are less well-nourished and don't eat the way they should.

	Mean	s.d.	N
Non-employment	2.27	1.00	26
Part-time	3.21	1.19	14
Full-time	2.92	1.38	53

Students whose mothers worked part-time during adolescent years were more likely perceive that children of working mothers fail to eat as well as they would if their mothers were not employed. Young adults whose mothers were not employed were least likely to endorse this item.

Discussion

On both the cost and benefit summary scales and several individual scale items, significant differences emerged among respondents whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy and those whose mothers either worked fulltime or not at all. Young adults whose mothers worked part-time during the first two years of their life perceived significantly greater advantages and fewer disadvantages associated with maternal employment than young adults whose mothers worked fulltime or were not employed. Interestingly, on the majority of measures, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of children whose mothers worked full-time and stayed at home during their infancy.

Participants whose mothers worked full-time or stayed at home during their infancy were more likely to perceive the following as being psychological risks associated with maternal employment: a tendency for children to display psychological problems, lower self-esteem, development of less competence as future parents, greater suffering, failure to establish warm and secure relationships with mother. Participants whose mothers worked full-time or stayed at home during their infancy also associated the greatest academic, behavioral and environmental risks with maternal employment. These respondents were more likely to voice concerns about poorer school performance, experimentation with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age, trouble with the law; and exposure to dangerous situations.

Students whose mothers worked part-time during infancy not only reported the fewest costs associated with maternal work, but also reported the most benefits. They were more likely

to believe that maternal employment enhanced ability of children to be role models for leading busy and productive lives, regard for women's intelligence and competence, and son's preparation to cooperate with a wife.

The results in this study support the studies done by Harr (1999), Richards and Duckett (1994), and Muller (1995). Harr found significant differences in his data indicating better adjustment for children of part-time employed mothers, rather than full-time employed mothers. Children of part-time employed mothers demonstrated better adjustment than children of full-time employed mothers, when mothers resumed working after their children were school-aged. Richards and Duckett stated that working and middle-class 5th to 8th grade children from two-parent families with part-time employed mothers were likely to have higher self-esteem than children with nonemployed or full-time mothers. Finally, Muller stated that children performed best when their mothers worked part-time, even after taking into account aspects of student and family background (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, family income, parents' education, family structure, etc.). He also found that mothers who were employed part-time had the highest levels of involvement with their children.

Young adults whose mothers worked part-time during their infancy may have responded in this way because their mothers' level of participation in the work force was presumably sufficient enough to produce certain perceived benefits. Participants whose mothers worked part-time during infancy may have expressed fewer associated fewer psychological, academic, behavioral, and environmental risks, and also expressed more benefits with maternal employment because those participants whose mothers worked part-time were sufficiently available to avoid psychological and behavioral risks. Their work did not preclude maternal-infant relationships nor the availability to the needs of the infant. Part-time mothers' work choice allowed them to spend adequate, balanced time both in the workplace and at home with their children. Young adults whose mothers worked part-time during infancy emerged as strongest advocates for maternal employment, hailing advantages and downplaying disadvantages.

When maternal employment was operationalized differently, in terms of experience after two years of age, a different pattern of findings emerged. On both cost and benefit summary scales and individual items, students whose mothers were not employed during preschool years perceived the most costs and least benefits associated with maternal employment. The students whose mothers worked part-time or full-time perceived similar advantages and disadvantages.

The results from analyses based on maternal employment status during the elementary school years largely parallel those found for the preschool period. On both cost and benefit summary scales and individual items, students whose mothers were not employed during elementary school years perceived the greatest costs and least benefits as being associated with maternal employment, while the students whose mothers worked part-time or full-time unvaryingly saw more advantages and fewer disadvantages associated with maternal employment.

It seems likely that familiarity and loyalty played a large role in determining the responses given by these participants. Young adults of non-employed mothers may see greater costs associated with maternal employment because those children grew up knowing what it was like to have a mother that was non-employed and cannot easily envision what it would have been like to have a mother who was employed. Therefore, they may assume that a mother's staying home is more beneficial and less detrimental. They may be critical of maternal employment because it is unfamiliar to them. Young adults whose mothers were employed either part-time or

full-time during their preschool and elementary school years probably evaluated maternal employment more favorably because they are more familiar with this work choice. These participants could have also responded the way they did because they are loyal to their parents and to the choices that their family made. If their mothers were not employed, favoring nonemployment is supportive of their mother's choice. Those whose mothers worked either part-time or full-time may be voicing their loyalty by expressing the advantages and minimizing the disadvantages associated with this lifestyle.

Another possibility is that students whose mothers did not work, lacking personal experience with maternal employment, are more likely to echo popular alarmist myths about the risks associated with maternal employment. Without personal evidence to the contrary, they endorse beliefs common among many adults about the price children pay for their mothers' decisions to work. Consistent with this reasoning, the children of employed mothers may have adjusted their attitudes in light of their own failure to encounter obstacles as a result of their mothers' working.

A final possibility is that the children whose mothers stayed at home have a keener understanding of the costs associated with maternal employment because they are more aware of what they might have sacrificed had their mothers' choice been different. According to this line of reasoning, children of nonemployed mothers are in a privileged position for evaluating the costs associated with maternal employment.

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